

But however lenient a view be taken of this type of treachery, the circumstance at all events laid the King and his Council under an obligation to deal as gently as possible with those whom they had deceived. The pardons delivered at Mile End ought at least to have turned the scale on the side of mercy.

Some of the rioters are less to be pitied than others. Those who had seized the opportunity to massacre the Flemings deserved severe treatment. But even in London revenge outran decency. A block was set up in Cheapside by the authorities, on the site which had a few days before been used by the rebels as their Place de la Revolution, and on it scores of victims were offered up to the *manes* of those who had there perished. The friends of the murdered Flemings, some say even their widows, were allowed the brutal satisfaction of themselves cutting off the heads of the murderers whom they identified. The Mayor caused all peasants whom he found in London to be executed, besides rioters falling under his proper jurisdiction.¹

Meanwhile the King, turning westward from Chelmsford and Havering, arrived at St. Albans to do justice between the abbey and its rebellious serfs. Since no murder had here been committed by those who had risen for their liberty, justice might well have been tempered with mercy. Yet a revenge was taken so horrible that it might disgust anyone, except the monk who gleefully tells the story. Tressilian hanged fifteen of those who had attempted to break the yoke of servitude. The Assize at St. Albans was further distinguished by the sentence and execution of John Ball himself ; he had been caught at Coventry in attempting to escape westward, and sent to meet his fate at the hands of the Lord Chief Justice.² On the 22nd the royal party went on to Berkhamstead, and thence by King's Langley and Henley to Beading and Easthampstead in Berkshire. Here, in all probability, the work of vengeance was continued, but we have unfortunately no records of the business done in these parts. At Reading John of Gaunt joined his nephew.³

¹ Wals., ii. 14 ; Higden, ix. 8.

* Wals., ii. 31-41; Higden, ix. 7; Knighton, ii. 150. * See Ap.